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Two Inscribed Documents of the Athenian Empire The Chalkis Decree and the Tribute Reassessment Decree

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Front cover: Chalkis decrees, [IG I³ 40](#) = Acrop. 6509 © Acropolis Museum (photo: Socratis Mavrommatis).

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CONTENTS

Contents	i
Bibliography and Abbreviations	ii
Preface.....	1
Section 1: Introduction to Inscribed Athenian Decrees of the Fifth Century BC	4
Section 2: The Chalkis Decree	11
Section 3: The Tribute Reassessment Decree	32

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IG: *Inscriptiones Graecae* [explained at [end of sect. 1](#)].

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SEG: *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* [explained at [end of sect. 1](#)].

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TWO INSCRIBED DOCUMENTS OF THE ATHENIAN EMPIRE: THE CHALKIS DECREE AND THE TRIBUTE REASSESSMENT DECREE

S. D. Lambert

PREFACE

The Athenian Empire of the fifth century BC lasted no longer than a human lifespan, being dissolved in 404¹ after [Athens'](#) defeat by [Sparta](#) in the Peloponnesian War, but, together with arguably the most radical experiment in democracy in the history of the West and a remarkable cultural efflorescence, it is one of the three historical phenomena which have endowed fifth-century Athens with enduring fascination as a subject of study. Our most important source for the history of the Athenian Empire down to 411 is Thucydides' unfinished *History of the Peloponnesian War*, a war which, in Thucydides' analysis, was caused above all by Spartan fear of the inexorable growth of Athenian power. In book 1 the great historian briefly describes the Empire's origins as a League of Greek states, mainly islands and coastal cities of the Aegean, based on the island of [Delos](#) and formed in 478 in the wake of the defeat of the Persian invasion of Greece with the initial purpose of taking the offensive to the Persians (1.96-97). He goes on to sketch briefly the story of the early development of the alliance down to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in 431, a key theme being the progressive increase in the power of Athens in the League and the progressive weakening of the other allies (1.98-117).

It was not long after the foundation of the League that the first ally revolted, the Aegean island of [Naxos](#). Athens forced Naxos into submission (98), which supplies the occasion for Thucydides to offer an analysis of the dynamic underlying this and subsequent revolts (99). At the outset allies could opt either to contribute ships to League forces or to make monetary payments of "tribute" (Greek, *phoros*). The main causes for revolts, explains Thucydides, were failures to pay the tribute, or supply the ships, or sometimes desertion while on campaign. The Athenians took a hard line with their allies, and so became unpopular. For their part, the allies were reluctant to be involved in campaigns that took them away from home, and contributed to their own weakness by increasingly choosing the easier option of monetary tribute rather than ships. As a result the Athenians had more money to spend on the development of their own navy, and the allies when they revolted were short both of resources and military experience.

¹ All dates are BC unless stated otherwise. This Paper includes links both internally and to external sites, including [AIO](#). Readers may find it easiest to download the Paper and read it while keeping their web browser open. Readers viewing the Paper online may find it best to open the links in a new tab (right-click the link and select "open in new tab", or on Macs click on the link while holding down the Command key).

From 460 to 446 Athens and Sparta, the strongest Greek land power, leader of a league of Peloponnesian cities, and under an oligarchic system of government in contrast to Athens' democracy, fought the so-called "First Peloponnesian War" (Thuc. 1.103-115), and as part of this conflict, for ten years after 458/7 (battle of Oinophyta) Athens controlled her northern neighbour, Boeotia (see [map](#), p. 11). For this period her maritime alliance for the first and only time expanded to include a significant land empire in mainland Greece. Eventual Athenian defeat at Koroneia in Boeotia in 446 saw the Boeotians regain their independence (113) and was the occasion for the island of Euboea, which was close to Boeotia both physically and culturally, to revolt from Athens. The revolt was quelled by an Athenian force under the generalship of Pericles, shortly after which Athens and Sparta concluded a Thirty Years Peace (114-15), which was to last until the outbreak of the (Second) Peloponnesian War in 431.

Thucydides does not even mention Chalkis, one of the four major cities of Euboea, in his extremely brief narrative of the revolt, but a well-preserved inscription from the Athenian acropolis survives, containing provisions made by the Athenians on (probably) this occasion. It gives us one of our fullest and most detailed insights into the settlement of an allied revolt and we shall examine it in some detail in [section 2](#). This is prefaced, in [section 1](#), by an introduction to inscribed Athenian decrees of the fifth century, designed to help the reader make sense of this genre of document.

On the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War proper in 431, Thucydides signals how important the relationship between Athens and her allies was going to be. One of the advantages Athens enjoyed over Sparta was the greater extent of her financial resources, but this advantage depended to a large extent on the allied tribute. As Pericles tells the Athenians at the beginning of the war, it was therefore crucial that Athens keep the allies firmly under control (Thuc. 2.13). Thucydides is clear enough on the principle, and relations with individual allies play a significant role in his narrative, in the early years of the war notably in his description of the revolt of [Mytilene](#) in 428-427 and his famous account of the debate at Athens about the severity of the measures to be taken against it after the revolt had been put down (Thuc. 3.1-50). Thucydides does not, however, inform his readers in any detail about Athenian policy on the tribute in the early stages of the war. The gap in the historical record is filled, to an extent at least, by a series of three informative inscriptions of the mid-420s, the central one being the record of a tribute reassessment carried out in 425/4. We shall study this inscription in [section 3](#).

This Paper, which is being published both in hard copy and online, is designed to be read with the translations of [IG I³ 40](#) (Chalkis) and [IG I³ 71](#) (tribute reassessment) on Attic Inscriptions Online (AIO, www.atticinscriptions.com). For ease of reference, however, the translations are also incorporated into sections 2 and 3 below. It is hoped that the Paper will be found useful by teachers and students of Ancient History at University level, but it is also designed to help 6th-form teachers and students with the study of these two inscriptions, which are set as source material for the "Relations

Preface

between Greek states and between Greek and non-Greek states, 492-404 BC” period study under the OCR specification for A-level Ancient History (H407, for first assessment in 2019). The Paper assumes no knowledge of ancient Greek, but transliterated Greek equivalents are supplied for some translated terms.

I am very grateful to Gil Davis, Christopher Joyce, Peter Liddel, Polly Low, Angelos Matthaiou and P. J. Rhodes, whose acute observations and constructive input helped improve the first draft of this Paper, to Sarah Holliday and Mari Williams, who offered welcome feedback and encouragement from the perspective of their experience of A-level teaching, to Terry Abbott for drawing the map, and to Irene Vagionakis for technical support. I am also grateful to my University, Cardiff, for granting me the research leave in 2016/7 during which this Paper was written, to the Humboldt Foundation for supporting a visit to the University of Heidelberg, February to April 2017, which enabled me to take advantage there of the excellent library of the Seminar für Alte Geschichte, and to the British School at Athens, in whose equally excellent library I completed the Paper in May 2017.

Stephen Lambert

Cardiff, 31 May 2017

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION TO INSCRIBED ATHENIAN DECREES OF THE FIFTH CENTURY BC

The Athenian Assembly began regularly inscribing some of its decisions (conventionally translated “decrees”, the Greek term, *psephismata*, literally means “things voted”) on stone on the acropolis of Athens around the middle of the fifth century BC.² It is not coincidental that this was at the same time as two other major developments affecting the acropolis: the decision in 454 to remove to the acropolis from Delos the treasury of the Delian League; and the ceasing of hostilities against Persia in 450 (whether de facto or, as was thought later, by a formal treaty, the “Peace of Kallias”), which removed the original purpose of the League’s existence and marked a crucial point in its mutation into an Athenian Empire. Up to this point the acropolis had been left in ruins since its sack by the Persians. Peace with Persia was the trigger for its reconstruction — the Periclean building programme that produced the superb monuments that can still be visited today: the Propylaia (monumental gateway), the Parthenon, the temple of Athena Nike (Athena “Victory”) and the Erechtheum. From the fifty years from the transfer of the treasury to the dissolution of the fifth-century Athenian democracy by the repressive oligarchy, the Thirty, which seized power briefly in 404/3 following Athens’ defeat in the Peloponnesian War, about 230 inscribed decrees of the Athenian Assembly are preserved, some 90% of them from the acropolis.³

The decrees are mostly inscribed on stelai (singular, stelē or stela), upright slabs of stone, higher than they were wide, wider than they were thick, usually inscribed on one side only, sometimes on both sides. Unlike the great Periclean buildings they are no longer in situ, though today’s visitor can see some examples in the Acropolis Museum (including the Chalkis decree that we shall discuss in section 2), and others in Athens’ Epigraphical Museum (including the tribute reassessment decree that we shall discuss in section 3); but monumentally they complement on a small scale the larger structures of the acropolis. Like temple architecture they are often headed by pediments or relief sculpture depicting both human and divine figures;⁴ the text often begins with an invocation of the gods (the single word, “gods!”); and their carefully designed layout and lettering, with letters typically inscribed in vertical columns (Greek, *stoichedon*), creating a geometrical pattern, make them appropriately graceful objects for presentation to the gods (they are in this sense akin to the many dedications to the gods also placed on the acropolis), and achieve on today’s human viewer, as no doubt on human viewers then, a

² A small number of inscribed Athenian decrees date earlier than this, but these were mainly erected in other locations (the Herakleion at [Marathon](#), *IG I³ 2* and 3; [Eleusis](#), *IG I³ 5*; the [City Eleusinion](#), *IG I³ 6*; the sanctuary of Poseidon at [Sounion](#), *IG I³ 8*). Only two extant decrees inscribed on stone erected on the acropolis can be dated with confidence to before 454: *IG I³ 1* (ca. 510-500?, relating to the island of [Salamis](#)); and *IG I³ 4* (485/4?, relating to the Hekatompedon, i.e. a structure on the acropolis itself).

³ 90% from acropolis: [Liddel 2003](#), 85.

⁴ See [Lawton 1995](#).

powerful aesthetic impact consonant with that of the larger monuments. Ideologically too they were of a piece with their environment: decrees with religious content feature strongly among those selected for inscription.⁵ Moreover, from 454/3 to 432/1, the eve of the Peloponnesian War, the city inscribed lists of the 1/60th portion set aside for Athena from the tribute paid by each member of the League on two massive stelai on the acropolis (the first covering the years 454/3 - 440/39, is nearly four metres high, the second, covering 439/8 - 432/1, slightly smaller). Like the other acropolis monuments, these were both a proud statement of Athens' power in the world, and recognition of the indispensable role, in the past and for the future, of the gods, and especially of Athens' patron deity, Athena, in securing that power.

Were these inscriptions on the acropolis meant to be read, and if so, by whom? Or was their significance mainly symbolic? It is a natural question for us to ask, but it is posed in terms that would have puzzled the Athenians themselves. It may help us to understand the practice of inscribing on stone if we reflect for a moment on two crucial points. First, to a greater extent than we are familiar with in the modern world, ancient Greek inscriptions had what anthropologists call "agency", that is to say they were conceived of either as independent agents in their own right (sometimes they have their own "voice", as for example the [boundary stone](#) of the Athenian agora — the civic centre and market to the north of the acropolis — which is inscribed with the words, "I am the boundary of the agora"), or as potent extensions of human agency. The precise character of that agency varies, but — and this is the second important point — the agency normally includes within its scope both gods and men. We should not forget that we are in a world in which it was common practice to curse individuals by placing inscribed lead tablets into the ground for the attention of, and action by, the powers below. For good or ill, inscribed objects were meant to have an impact on the world, on both its human and divine spheres.

In the case of at least some inscribed decrees that impact can be articulated in part as the conveyance of information about arrangements which are intended to be enduring or permanent. Thus, for example, there is an inscribed decree of 418/7 which makes detailed arrangements for the sanctuary of Kodros, Neleus and Basile, including specification of the terms of a lease of land attached to the sanctuary ([IG I³ 84](#)). Its inscribing clause runs (ll. 26-28):

"So that anyone who wishes may be able to know, let the secretary
of the Council inscribe this decree on a stone stele and place it in the Neleion

⁵ Of the ca. 240 total of inscribed decrees from before 403/2 (i.e. the ca. 230 dating to after 454 and the handful inscribed before that), ca. 68 award honours, almost all to foreigners (28%), ca. 54 are treaties or otherwise relate to foreign affairs (23%), ca. 46 are religious measures (19%), ca. 9 are on other topics (4%), ca. 63 are too fragmentary for their subject matter to be determinable (26%). See [Sickinger 1999](#), 242 n. 45; [Meyer 2013](#), 458 n. 22.

next to the railings.”

Such formulations are rare, however, and where they occur seem motivated more by a concern to make detailed information known to those with a specific interest than by an abstract ideologically driven concern to make official information freely available. Partly for this reason, unlike some scholars of earlier generations, the most recent scholarship no longer sees a democratic commitment to “freedom of information” in the most radical phase of the Athenian democracy following Ephialtes’ reforms of 462/1⁶ as a major driver behind the development of the “epigraphic habit” on the acropolis.⁷ The timing also does not look quite right; as we have seen, the increase in inscribing seems to be associated more with developments in the Athenian empire at the end of the 450s and the subsequent Periclean building programme; and there is the simple point that access to information can be, and was, supplied much more cheaply and easily by ephemeral means such as painted wooden boards. Inscriptions are not simply written texts, they are physical monuments and an adequate account of them must comprehend their monumentality.

The agency inherent in inscribed decrees is multi-faceted. The most common inscribed decrees were decrees honouring foreigners, usually individuals, sometimes whole communities. Their agency has two main aspects: honorific decrees that were inscribed usually granted enduring, often hereditary, privileges such as the Athenian citizenship: by inscribing the decree in a permanent form in a sanctuary or other religious space the inscription acted as a guarantee of those privileges, before gods and men; and the inscription, as commemorative monument, itself enhanced the honour bestowed in the decree and was intended to encourage others to act in similar ways that benefited the city, in the expectation that they too might be honoured.⁸ How, then, should we articulate the agency of our two inscriptions? The Chalkis decree, located in the spiritual heart of the city, solemnises the undertakings before the divine powers, including crucially oaths, and serves as a permanent reminder and guarantee of what has been agreed by both sides; while the reassessment decree is clearly of a piece with the tribute lists and with the other larger-scale acropolis monuments: both an expression of the city’s power and an acknowledgement of the divine sponsorship and support without which that power would not exist. With both inscriptions, gods and men are invited to witness, stand by and work with the city in giving effect to the decree’s provisions.

The reader may find some other background information helpful for understanding the inscriptions we shall be studying in sections 2 and 3. Two institutions were involved with the making of the city’s decisions recorded on these inscriptions: the

⁶ Ephialtes had removed most of the remaining political powers of the old Council of the Areopagos.

⁷ See [Sickinger 2009](#), [Meyer 2013](#), [Lambert 2017](#), chapter 1.

⁸ This is commonly made explicit in the texts of decrees after ca. 350, but is implicit before that. See [Lambert 2017](#), chapter 3.

Council and the “People” (Greek, *Demos*). *Demos* also forms one part of the word, *demokratia*, meaning “rule of the People”. Incidentally the same word, *demos*, in this case conventionally translated “deme”, was used for the 139 Attic towns, villages and city precincts, which, since Cleisthenes’ reform of the organisation of Attica in 508/7, had been the basis of Athens’ local organisation. The “People”, meaning the whole body of adult male citizens, voting by majority in the Assembly (Greek, *Ekklesia*), was the sovereign decision-making body of classical Athens. The Council (Greek, *Boulē*) is the Council of 500, which had also been instituted in Cleisthenes’ reforms. It oversaw the day-to-day administration of the city and its officials, and prepared the business of the Assembly. The Assembly could only make decisions on the basis of a resolution put up to it by the Council, a *probouleuma*. The *probouleuma* could be “open”, in effect simply placing a matter on the agenda of the Assembly without recommending a course of action, or “closed”, i.e. including a recommended course of action. In either case the Assembly could do with the *probouleuma* as it wished: it might accept a closed *probouleuma* unamended; accept it, while adding a supplement to it (a “rider”); formulate its own proposal, which might or might not rework the *probouleuma*; or decide to take no action at all. Decrees in which the Assembly rubber-stamped what the Council had proposed are known by modern scholars as “probouleumatic”, those in which the Assembly reworked or replaced the *probouleuma*, “non-probouleumatic”. Both in the Council and the Assembly a decree was usually proposed by a member of the relevant body. In the case of probouleumatic decrees the proposer of the decree in the Council was also responsible for proposing it in the Assembly. Unfortunately from the point of view of the modern historian, at this period proposers are identified on the inscriptions by name only, so e.g. “Kallias”, without the father’s name and demotic (i.e. the deme where the person’s family resided at the time of Cleisthenes’ reforms) which identified individuals, e.g. “Kallias son of Hipponikos of Alopeke”. Unless the name or context is very distinctive, this means that we can not usually identify the proposers (or other officials and persons mentioned in a decree by name only).

It will be helpful to the reader to be made aware of two further points about the Council of 500. First, it would be easy to assume that it was a significantly more elite or exclusive body than the Assembly. This was not the case. Members were appointed by a process involving the drawing of lots (a common method in ancient Athens of deciding between persons equally entitled to some office or other benefit) from adult male citizens aged over 30, a fixed quota from each deme according to the deme’s size, making 50 members in all from each of the ten tribes into which the demes were organised. Tenure of office as councillor was for one year only, and crucially it was only permitted to serve on the Council twice in a lifetime. By 411 at the latest, but probably from the Periclean period, councillors were paid a subsistence allowance. The effect of this system was to ensure that the Council was not dominated by an elite.

Second, the contingent of 50 men from each tribe on the Council, known as a *prytany*, acted as the Council's executive committee, and was on continuous stand-by, for a tenth of the year. For some purposes the tribes had a conventional official order,⁹ but the order in which they served as the Council *prytany* was determined afresh by lot each year. At this period the chairman of the *prytany*, who was appointed for one day only, acted as chairman of any meetings of the Council or Assembly that took place on his day in office, a duty which included putting proposals to the vote.¹⁰ The secretary of the Council also held office at this period for a single *prytany*.¹¹ Among other things he was normally responsible for the inscription of a decree, and is generally named in the decree's heading or prescript. From the end of the 420s it became common to name the eponymous archon (chief official after whom the year was called) in decree prescripts and since we know the names of all the eponymous archons who held office at this period, that makes the dating of decrees much easier. Fortunately the archon of 425/4, Stratokles, is mentioned twice in the text of the reassessment decree (section 3), but the Chalkis decree (section 2) is more typical of decrees of ca. 450-420 in lacking any mention of the archon, and as commonly in these years, it is impossible to be certain about its date. One other dating criterion should be mentioned. The normal form of the Greek letter sigma (equivalent of our "S") is Σ, but in Attica the older form of this letter had only three bars (Ϛ). It used to be thought that the three-barred sigma did not appear after about 450, but this has now been shown to be erroneous.¹²

The inscriptions we shall be studying also refer to the courts. These were manned by juries consisting of adult male citizens over 30 years of age (Greek, *dikastai*), usually sitting in large numbers (so e.g. in the reassessment decree, a court of 1,000 is provided for). Notionally the total number of jurors was 6,000. The courts were usually chaired by one of the nine officials known as archons. In addition to the eponymous archon, there was the archon known as the "king" (*basileus*), whose court dealt principally with religious matters, the "polemarch" (literally, "commander-in-chief", but by this time a legal official rather than a military one), whose court dealt with matters involving foreigners, and six "court presidents" (*thesmothetai*), who chaired most of the remaining courts. The archons' responsibilities in relation to their courts were much more limited

⁹ The official order was: Erechtheis^I, Aigeis^{II}, Pandionis^{III}, Leontis^{IV}, Akamantis^V, Oineis^{VI}, Kekropis^{VII}, Hippothontis^{VIII}, Aiantis^{IX}, Antiochis^X.

¹⁰ By the early 370s, in a move typical of the democracy's reluctance to assign very much power to any one board of officials, the task of presiding over the business of the Assembly had been removed from the *prytany*, and allocated to a "presiding committee" (*proedroi*), consisting of nine members, one from each of the tribes except the one in *prytany*.

¹¹ From some time between 365/4 and 363/2, this secretary began to hold office for a year, and from at least 356/5 he was usually chosen from a different tribe in succession in the official order.

¹² See most recently [Tracy 2014a](#). *IG* I³ reflects the old doctrine and many inscriptions in it are accordingly dated too high.

than a modern judge. By this period all substantive decisions were taken by the jury, without guidance from the archon chairing the court.

The armed forces at this period were commanded by “generals” (who held command at sea, as in English “admirals”, as well as on land). They were ten in number, corresponding to the ten tribes (usually, but not always, there was one general from each tribe), but they were not commanders of tribal contingents. Unlike most Athenian officials at this period, who were appointed by lot, the generals were elected and, although in office for only a year, they could be, and often were, re-elected year after year. At this period the generals were detailed ad hoc to specific commands depending on the city’s requirements, and would therefore command contingents from tribes other than their own.

It will also be useful for the reader to know something about the operation of the Athenian calendar. The archons held office for a lunar year which began, notionally or actually, at the first new moon after the summer solstice, i.e. usually ca. July in our calendar. The Athenian year, therefore, ran from summer to summer (hence Athenian years are usually designated as running over two of our years, e.g. 432/1). The twelve months, which were all named for religious festivals (some of which were obsolescent in Attica by the classical period) were, in order: Hekatombaion, Metageitnion, Boedromion, Pyanopsion, Maimakterion, Posideon, Gamelion, Anthesterion, Elaphebolion, Mounichion, Thargelion, Skirophorion. Each month consisted of either 30 days (“full”) or 29 days (“hollow”). As was common in the ancient world an intercalary month was inserted from time to time to ensure, over the long term, correspondence between the lunar year (ca. 354-355 days) and the longer solar year (c. 365-366 days). Individual days were also quite commonly inserted into or subtracted from the lunar calendar, for reasons that are usually obscure to us, and in the hellenistic period decrees are fairly commonly dated to such intercalary days.

In the fifth century the Council’s year operated independently from the archon’s year. It was a solar year of 365 or 366 days, divided, as we have seen, into 10 prytanies. It was later made coterminous with the lunar year, most likely on the restoration of the democracy in 403/2. In the fourth century the first four prytanies of a year had 36 days, the remaining six 35 days, though prytanies were longer in intercalary years, and different arrangements must have been made to accommodate the longer Council year in the fifth century.

The basic unit of currency was the drachma, equivalent to a day’s wage for a skilled labourer. There were six obols in a drachma, a hundred drachmas in a mina, and six thousand drachmas (or 60 minai) in a talent. Only a wealthy man would own property worth more than five talents.

Some information about standard epigraphical publications will also be helpful. The authoritative corpus of the Greek texts of Attic inscriptions from before 403/2 is

[*Inscriptiones Graecae* I](#), the third edition of which appeared between 1981 and 1998. Thus the internationally recognised reference numbers for the two inscriptions discussed below are [IG I³ 40](#) (Chalkis decree) and [IG I³ 71](#) (reassessment decree, also known as “Thoudippos’ decree”). The Greek text of the main body of the latter, however (ll. 1-60), has been substantially improved and a new fragment added by [Matthaiou 2009](#), 18-68, and it is that text that we translate on *AIO*. New editions of *IG* are published only every few generations, and in the years between there are annual updates in the light of new finds and scholarly work, published in the [Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum](#) (*SEG*). References to other commonly used editions or translations of our two inscriptions are:
Chalkis decree = [OR](#) 131, [ML](#) 52, [Fornara](#) 103, [LACTOR⁴](#) 1.78.
Reassessment decree = [OR](#) 153, [ML](#) 69, [Fornara](#) 136, [LACTOR⁴](#) 1.138.

SECTION 2

THE CHALKIS DECREE¹³



Fig. 1. Map of Attica and Euboea (drawn by Terry Abbott)

Background: Athens and Euboea¹⁴

Euboea is a long island, the central and northern parts of which lie off the east coasts of Boeotia and Lokris, and its southern part off the east coast of Attica (see map, fig. 1). As we shall see, one of Athens' first foreign ventures following Cleisthenes' "democratic" re-organisation of Attica in 508/7 was to defeat and subdue Chalkis, the Euboean city which lies at the point where the west coast of the island runs closest to the mainland of Boeotia, and the strait narrows to less than 100 metres in width. This was the first of many interventions by the Athenian democracy in an island which was crucial to Athens'

¹³ [JG I](#)³ 40, [ML](#) 52, [OR](#) 131, [Fornara](#) 103, [LACTOR](#)⁴ 1.78.

¹⁴ In composing the background to this section I benefited much from [Reber, Hansen and Ducrey 2004](#) and [Moreno 2007](#), 77-102, though differing from both on some points.

security and, no less significantly, to her economic well-being. For while the terrain of Attica was predominantly rocky, Euboea was rich and fertile, suitable, for example, as Attica for the most part was not, for the rearing of cattle and the production of wheat, and proverbial in antiquity for the abundance, quality and range of its agricultural products.¹⁵ As the elite Athenian orator Isocrates wrote in 380 in a political pamphlet praising Athens' fifth-century Empire, Euboea "was in a natural position as regards command of the sea and surpassed all the islands in every advantage; we controlled it almost more than we did our own territory" (4 *Panegyric*, 108).¹⁶

In fact, it was Athens' policy not only to ensure that the four major cities of Euboea, running from north to south, [Hestiaia](#), [Chalkis](#), [Eretria](#) and [Karystos](#), were politically "on-side", but also to establish on the island several "cleruchies". These involved confiscating tracts of land from their existing inhabitants and allocating them to Athenian "settlers" (cleruchs), who might or might not actually reside on their overseas landholdings. Sometimes the entire original population of the city would be removed (killed, enslaved, or moved elsewhere), sometimes the original city would continue to exist alongside the cleruchy (which, unlike a "colony", *apoikia*, was not politically independent of Athens). Cleruchies were usually founded on the basis of an equal distribution of allotments, but it may well have been possible for the cleruchs to sell on their allotment. In any case the Euboean cleruchies must have been the main means by which a high proportion of the productive land of the island fell into Athenian hands; and some very wealthy Athenians came to possess extensive landholdings there. Euboean properties feature, for example, among those confiscated from the group of wealthy Athenians who were convicted of profaning the Eleusinian Mysteries and mutilating the Herms (statues of Hermes set up by the wayside) in the run-up to the launch of Athens' ill-fated Sicilian expedition in 415.¹⁷ One of them, Oionias of [Atene](#) (a deme in south-west Attica), owned land on Euboea and unharvested crops, including figs, grapes and olives, worth the vast sum of 81 talents, 2000 dr. (*IG* I³ 422, ll. 375-78). To put this in perspective, the entire annual tribute of Chalkis in 442/1 was only 3 talents (*IG* I³ 270, col. V l. 32; raised to 10 talents in the wartime conditions of 425/4, *IG* I³ 71, col. 1 l. 71).

The cleruchies were no doubt the principal origin of these extensive Athenian holdings on Euboea, but they were not the only one. For example, in the discussions surrounding the restoration of democracy in 403/2 a citizen named Phormisios proposed limiting Athenian citizenship to landholders, and the metic (i.e. resident non-Athenian) Lysias (whose brother had been murdered by the Thirty) wrote a speech against the proposal, in which he refers in passing to an agreement facilitating marriages between

¹⁵ [Moreno 2007](#), 81-88.

¹⁶ The orators Andocides 3.9 and Aeschines 2.175 make similar remarks about the extent to which Athens controlled Euboea at the height of the Athenian Empire.

¹⁷ Extracts from the set of inscriptions recording the confiscations are translated on AIO: [IG](#) I³ 421, 425 and 426.

Athenians and citizens of Euboean cities (*epigamia*) (Lysias 34 *Concerning the Preservation of the Ancestral Constitution*, 3). The character and extent of this measure may have been rhetorically distorted or exaggerated by Lysias (and it is not referred to in any other source), but, insofar as it is historical, it would presumably have permitted children of mixed marriages to be Athenian citizens and inherit both Athenian and Euboean property.¹⁸

As a corollary of its dominion, Athens also established forts on the island; and some Attic forts, such as that at Rhamnous, on the coast opposite Euboea, may also have been constructed in part with a view to securing control of Euboea and its approaches.¹⁹ Thucydides tells us about one of these forts in his narrative of the Athenian naval defeat by the Peloponnesians off the coast of Euboea in 411. Those Athenians who took refuge in Eretria itself, thinking Eretria was friendly, were slaughtered by the Eretrians (an incident that supplies an interesting sidelight on how Athenian domination might be regarded by the Euboeans themselves), but those who found their way to the fortress (*teichisma*) of Eretria, which the Athenians themselves held, escaped, along with the ships that reached Chalkis (8.95).

At any rate Euboea came, over the course of the fifth century, to be symbiotic with Athens, and Thucydides in his narrative frequently remarks on how crucial the island was to the Athenians during the Peloponnesian War. When, at the beginning of the War, Pericles persuaded the Athenians to abandon their Attic homes and migrate to the city it was mainly to Euboea that they sent their farm animals (Thuc. 2.14); and one of the reasons why the Spartan fortification of Dekeleia (a deme in north-east Attica) in 413 had such a negative impact on the Athenians was that it cut off the supply-route from Euboea, which had previously been by land through Oropos (the border region between northeast Attica and Boeotia) via Dekeleia. This meant that supplies had now to be brought in via the much more costly sea-route around the southern tip of Attica, cape Sounion (Thuc. 7.28).²⁰ When, in 411, following the Athenian naval defeat at Eretria mentioned above, the whole island revolted (apart from Athenian-held Hestiaia), Thucydides vividly describes the consternation this caused in the minds of the Athenian population, greater even than the shock of the failure of the Sicilian expedition, for the loss of Euboea deprived them of an asset which, in the current circumstances, was of

¹⁸ [Moreno 2007](#), 100, plausibly sees this as a corollary of Pericles' Citizenship Law of 451/0, which had required Athenian citizens to have citizen parents on both sides, and as facilitating the transfer of Euboean land into Athenian ownership. It remains unclear, however, whether the measure might have been part of Pericles' settlement of Euboea in 446 (there is no sign of it in the inscriptions) or a later development.

¹⁹ [Moreno 2007](#), 120. On the fort at Vrachos on the edge of the Lelantine plain (between Chalkis and Eretria), which may have been associated with the Athenian cleruchy at Chalkis in 506, see [Moreno 2007](#), 101-102.

²⁰ The Athenians hastily fortified Sounion in the winter of 413/2 (Thuc. 8.4). On the remains of these fortifications and the associated ship-sheds see [Moreno 2007](#), 119.

greater value to them than Attica itself (Thuc. 8.96; cf. 95.2, cut off from access to Attica, “Euboea was everything to them”).

Background: Athens and Chalkis

Together with Eretria, Chalkis had been heavily involved in the earliest phase of Greek settlement in Sicily and Italy from the mid-eighth century, but apart from a shadowy early war with Eretria over control of Euboea’s [Lelantine](#) plain (Thuc. 1.15.3), very little is known about its political history until 506, when it joined the Peloponnesians and Boeotians in an attack on an Athens then emerging from the period of internal conflict (*stasis*) that had resulted in Cleisthenes’ “democratic” reforms of 508/7. As Thucydides’ predecessor, the great historian of the Persian wars, Herodotos, records, Athens defeated this attack and followed up with a successful invasion, defeating first the Boeotians and then (as the story went, on the same day) crossing to Euboea and defeating the Chalkidians (Hdt. 5.74). After this the Athenians, in an intervention that appears to have had in part a democratising agenda, confiscated the land belonging to the *hippobotai* of Chalkis (“horse-rearers”, a wealthy aristocracy²¹), giving it to 4,000 Athenian cleruchs.²² Herodotos adds the detail that they kept those *hippobotai* whom they captured in fetters, releasing them in due course for a ransom of two minai each. The fetters, he says, were still to be seen on the acropolis in his time (Hdt. 5.77). They and the monumental bronze chariot dedicated in commemoration of the victory were to remain on show for centuries; in the second century AD they were seen by the travel-writer, Pausanias, on his visit to the acropolis (1.28.2).²³ We next hear of the Athenian cleruchs when they were detailed to support the Eretrians during the first Persian invasion of 490, but withdrew to Athens when it became apparent that Eretria was not going to be defensible (Hdt. 6.100). It is not clear whether this represented a permanent withdrawal of the cleruchy.

Chalkis joined in the defence of Greece against the second Persian invasion of 480 (Hdt. 8.1, 8.46) and may well have been one of the original members of the Delian league,²⁴ though there seems to be no firm, specific, reference to it as a member until

²¹ Aristotle, *Politics* 1289b 36-39 and F618.

²² Though the date of composition is uncertain, there is a possible allusion to the democratisation of Chalkis, at this time, or perhaps earlier, in the lament of the elite poet Theognis that the good vineyards of Lelanton have been ravaged, “the good men are exiled, and the bad govern the city” (1.892-93).

²³ What was seen by Herodotos and Pausanias was in fact a re-dedication around the mid-5th century (possible occasions are after the battle of Oinophyta in 457, or after the Euboean revolt in 446) of a monument destroyed or removed by the Persians. We know this because fragments of both the original dedicatory inscription, and a later, mid-fifth-century copy, survive (*IG* I³ 501).

²⁴ This is perhaps implied for the Euboean cities other than Karystos by Thuc. 1.98.3.

Thucydides narrates the revolt of Euboea.²⁵ That revolt was part of the last act of the so-called First Peloponnesian War, during which Athens had briefly established control over Boeotia. However she had been forced to withdraw after her defeat at the battle of Koroneia in 447/6, and it was in the aftermath of that defeat that Euboea revolted (Thuc. 1.114). Pericles, Thucydides narrates, had just crossed over to the island with an Athenian army to suppress the revolt when he learnt that [Megara](#) (Athens' immediate neighbour west of [Eleusis](#)) had also revolted and the Peloponnesians were about to invade Attica. This caused Pericles to turn back to Attica. In the event the Peloponnesians withdrew after a brief raid, leaving Pericles free to return to Euboea:

“And the Athenians, crossing again to Euboea under the generalship of Pericles, subdued the whole of it, and settled the rest by agreement, but expelled the Hestians, occupying their land themselves. (115) Not long after withdrawing from Euboea, they made a treaty with the Lakedaimonians and their allies for thirty years [Thirty Years' Peace, 446/5], giving back to them [Nisaia](#) [the port of Megara], [Pegai](#), [Troizen](#) and [Achaia](#); for these were places of the Peloponnesians that the Athenians held.”

There are also references to this revolt of Euboea in two much later, historically less reliable, authors. Plutarch's *Lives* were written in the early second century AD, and designed as works of moral education rather than accurate historical record. In his *Life of Pericles* he duly records Pericles' initial crossing to Euboea and return to Attica to deal with the Peloponnesian threat (22), and at 23 he resumes the Euboean narrative:

“... turning his attention to the rebels and crossing to Euboea with fifty ships and five thousand hoplites, [Pericles] subdued the cities. And of the Chalkidians he expelled those called *hippobotai* who were distinguished by their wealth and prominence, and having removed the Hestians from their land he settled it with Athenians, treating only them implacably, because they had taken an Attic ship captive and killed the men in it.”

We have no way of telling how far the details not given by Thucydides about the size of the army and the reason for dealing harshly with the Hestians are correct, but the expulsion of the *hippobotai* on this occasion is inconsistent with Thucydides' clear implication that it was only at Hestiaia that Athens carried out expulsions. Most likely

²⁵ On the tribute list for 449/8 or 448/7 “Chalkidians” are recorded (IG I³ 264, col. IV l. 23). This may be Chalkis in Euboea, but since their neighbours in the list are [Byzantines](#) (l. 22) and (perhaps Thracian) [Neapolitans](#) (l. 24), it can not be ruled out that they were inhabitants of the [Chalkidike](#) peninsular in the northern Aegean, who could also be known as “Chalkidians”. The amount of the payment is uncertain (see [Paarmann 2007](#), Part IIA, p. 25, List 6, with Part II B, pp. 27-28 on l. 23).

Plutarch (or his source) simply misremembered the expulsion of the *hippobotai* in 506 recorded by Herodotos and transposed it in time to this later defeat of Chalkis by the Athenians.

A century or so after Plutarch, Aelian, the Roman author of a light-weight miscellany or digest of historical and literary information (some of it gleaned from Plutarch) written in Greek and aimed at a cultivated Roman readership, the *Varia Historia*, also recorded the incident recounted by Herodotos, at the head of a series of anecdotes about harsh treatment of captives in book 6 (6.1):

“When the Athenians conquered the Chalkidians they divided their land into two thousand allotments, the country known as “Hippobotos”, consecrated precincts to Athena in the place called Lelanton, and leased the rest according to the stelai stood by the [Royal Stoa](#) (*Stoa Basileios*) [in the Agora, so-called because it was by the office of the archon known as the *basileus*, “king”], which therefore contain a record of the leases. They bound their prisoners, and not even then did they cease their animosity against Chalkidians.”

Aelian supplies no historical context, but it is clear enough from his reference to the fettering of the *hippobotai* that this too is a slightly garbled recollection of Herodotos’ narrative of the expulsion of the *hippobotai* in 506. Records of leases of public land in foreign territories were indeed inscribed on stelai and some of them may have been erected by the Royal Stoa. A poorly preserved record of leases of sacred land at Chalkis, Eretria and Hestiaia from the second half of the fifth-century survives (*IG* I³ 418), and it is possible that this, or similar inscriptions, underlie Aelian’s remarks, but there are also inconsistencies: no such lease inscriptions survive from earlier than about 450, and the surviving inscription seems only to deal with sacred land (whereas Aelian writes about “the rest” of the land), and with land throughout Euboea (whereas Aelian writes only about land in Chalkis). The inscription shows that at some point Athens took control of sacred lands across Euboea, and it is possible that in the case of Chalkis such control dates from 506, but no independent weight can be assigned to Aelian’s rather confused testimony.

In addition to these literary sources, three Athenian inscribed decrees are extant which are usually taken as relating to the settlement of the island in 446. The best preserved is [IG](#) I³ 40, relating to Chalkis, and we shall examine it in more detail below; but there is also the more fragmentary *IG* I³ 39, usually thought to relate to the settlement of Eretria at this time, and *IG* I³ 41, which apparently contains detailed, but frustratingly fragmentary, arrangements for the cleruchy at Hestiaia. There are also what seem to be echoes of the arrangements for the Hestiaia cleruchy in the comic plays of this period. The character Strepsiades in Aristophanes’ *Clouds*, for example (first produced in 423), alludes to what “we and Pericles” did in knocking out Euboea and, the context seems to

imply, dividing up the land into cleruchic allotments (ll. 203-13); and for one well-informed Athenian political leader of the fourth century BC the capture of Euboea was remembered as one of Pericles' major achievements, alongside the taking of [Samos](#) (in 440-439, see [IG I³ 48](#)) and Aegina (see note in *AIO* on [IG I³ 1503](#)), the building of the Propylaia, the Odeion (a public building on the south side of the acropolis) and the Hekatompedon (i.e. the Parthenon), and the bringing of vast sums of money up to the acropolis.²⁶

Karystos is the least well documented of the four main Euboean cities in the fifth century, and it is unclear what happened to it in 446. It had been punished by the Greeks for fighting on the Persian side in 480 (Hdt. 8.112 and 121) and initially fought to retain its independence from the Delian League, but within a few years had been defeated and forced to join (Thuc. 1.98; Hdt. 9.105). It is possible that, in 446, an Athenian cleruchy had only recently been established there (perhaps the cleruchy "to Euboea and Naxos" sent by the Athenian general Tolmides mentioned by Pausanias 1.27.5, and dated to 453/2 by the historian of the first century BC, Diodoros of Sicily, 11.88²⁷) and that it did not participate in the revolt.

A final piece of information supplied by a literary source has been thought by some to be relevant in the context of our inscription. Philochoros was an Athenian of the third century BC who wrote a local history of Attica. A number of such histories are known, but only from quotations in other ancient authors. None of them survives intact. Fragment 130 of Philochoros' *History of Attica* is preserved in an ancient commentary on Aristophanes *Wasps* 718, written in the margins of medieval manuscripts of the play, and dates an Athenian campaign against Euboea to 424/3. There is no reference to this campaign in Thucydides or any other literary source, but Philochoros is generally reliable and a campaign of some kind probably did take place that year.

²⁶ Lykourgos, *Against Demades* F9.2.

²⁷ [Moreno 2007](#), 96.

2. The Chalkis Decree



Fig. 2. Chalkis decrees, [IG I³ 40](#) = Acrop. 6509 © Acropolis Museum (photo: Socratis Mavrommatis)

The Inscription

ATHENIAN RELATIONS WITH CHALKIS

[IG I³ 40](#) (text translated)

Other reference numbers: [OR](#) 131, [ML](#) 52, [Fornara](#) 103, [LACTOR](#)⁴ 1.78.

Date: 446/5 (or 424/3?) BC

Original location: Acropolis

Findspot: Acropolis (Acropolis Museum 6509)

Translation by: Stephen Lambert and Robin Osborne

Photograph: [Fig. 2](#)

2 The Council and People decided. Antiochis
was the prytany. Drakontides was chairman.

Decree 1

2 Diognetos proposed:
The Athenian Council and jurors
shall swear an oath in the following terms: 'I shall not expel the Chalkidians
5 from Chalkis, nor shall I lay waste
the city, nor shall I deprive any individual of
civic rights nor punish any with exile nor take any prisoner,
nor execute any, nor confiscate the money
of anyone not condemned in court, without the authority of the Athenian
10 People; and whenever I am a prytany member I shall not put anything
prejudicial to the interests of an individual or the community to the vote
without due notice, and any embassy that is sent I shall bring
before the Council and People
within ten days, as far as is possible; and I shall
15 maintain this while the Chalkidians obey the Athenian People.' An embassy is to
come from Chalkis and administer
the oath to the Athenians with the commissioners for oaths and
list the names of those who have sworn;
and the generals shall take care that all
20 take the oath.
The Chalkidians shall swear an oath in the following terms:
'I shall not revolt from the People of Athens
by any means or device whatsoever,
neither in word nor in deed, nor shall I obey anyone who does revolt;
25 and if anyone revolts I shall denounce him to the Athenians,
and I shall pay to the Athenians whatever tribute I

persuade them to agree, and I shall be
the best and fairest ally
I am able to be and shall help and defend the Athenian
30 People, in the event of anyone wronging the Athenian
People, and I shall obey the Athenian People'.
All the Chalkidians of military age shall
swear; and if anyone does not swear he is to be deprived
of his civic rights and his property is to be made public and
35 a tithe of it dedicated to Olympian Zeus.
An embassy shall go from Athens
to Chalkis with the commissioners for oaths
and administer the oath in Chalkis and list
those of the Chalkidians who have sworn.

Uninscribed space

Decree 2

40 Antikles proposed: for the good fortune of
the Athenians, the Athenians and Chalkidians shall make the
oath just as the Athenian People voted
for the Eretrians, and the generals shall take care
that this happens as quickly as possible.
45 As soon as possible the People shall choose
five men to go to Chalkis to exact the oaths.
And on the matter of hostages, they shall reply
to the Chalkidians that for the moment
the Athenians have decided to leave matters as they have been voted;
50 but when it seems good to them, they will deliberate and make
an agreement *or* exchange on terms which seem suitable
for the Athenians and the Chalkidians; and the
foreigners in Chalkis — except those living there who pay
no taxes to Athens, and anyone who has been given
55 tax exemption by the Athenian People — the rest
shall pay taxes to Chalkis, just like other
Chalkidians; and the secretary of the Council
shall write up this decree and oath at
Athens on a stone stele and set it down
60 on the acropolis at the expense of the Chalkidians;
and let the Council of the Chalkidians write it up and
set it down in Chalkis in the sanctuary of Zeus
Olympios. These things shall be voted about

the Chalkidians. *Uninscribed space*. And as for the sacrifices
65 for Euboea required *or* required about Euboea by the oracle,
three men chosen by the Council from their own number
shall perform them as quickly as possible with Hierokles;
and so that the sacrifices may take place as quickly as possible the generals
shall jointly take care of them and provide the money for them.

Decree 3

70 Archestratos proposed: in other respects as
Antikles proposed, but the Chalkidians shall hold officials to account
on their own behalf in Chalkis, just as the Athenians
do at Athens, except where a penalty of exile, execution,
or loss of civic rights is involved; and on these matters there shall be appeal
75 to Athens to the court of the *thesmothetai*
in accordance with the decree of the People; and as to the guarding
of Euboea, the generals shall take care of that
as best they can in the best interests
of the Athenians.

Uninscribed space

80 O A T H

Commentary

One of a pair of inscriptions?

The left side of the stone has been finished in such a way as to suggest that it abutted tightly to something else. The physical evidence is not conclusive,²⁸ and the decrees on our inscription are self-sufficient (though there are references to previous decrees at ll. 49 and 76), but it is possible that our inscription, labelled OATH in l. 80, belonged in a pair with another stele which contained the text of an agreement or treaty between Chalkis and Athens, and was labelled TREATY (*SYNTHEKAI*). In that case the first stele may have been headed with the name of the secretary of the Council, who is unusually missing from the heading of our inscription, and may have been responsible for inscribing both stelai.

²⁸ Experts have judged that the shallow cutting in the top of the stone probably served as a socket for the tenon of a decorative finial rather than the clamp that would be expected if there was an adjoining stele. See the note in [OR](#).

Prescript ([Il. 1-2](#))

The inscription begins with a short prescript, which records it as a decision of the Council and People (on these institutions see above [section 1](#)). The 50-man contingent of the Council from the tribe Antiochis was the prytany, but we are not told which of the ten prytanies in the year this was, and we learn nothing from the prescript that would identify the year. The chairman of the prytany was Drakontides. Without his father's name or deme name (demotic) he is not identifiable.²⁹ He was in office for just one day, and since no other chairman or prytany is named at the beginning of decree 2, and decree 3 is explicitly a rider to decree 2, all three decrees were most likely passed on the same day.

Decree 1 ([Il. 2-39](#))

The oaths inscribed as decree 1 are actually provided for in decree 2, but, as indicated by the label in l. 80, the main purpose of this stele is to spell out the solemn oath binding Chalkis and Athens, and it is natural enough that it should be inscribed first.

The proposer of the decree specifying the oaths is Diognetos (not identifiable). As specified in decree 2, what he proposed reproduced the oaths for Eretria (l. 43) and an inscribed fragment survives that contains some of the same wording, and has usually been identified as from the oaths for Eretria (*IG I³ 39*). It is possible that Diognetos was actually the proposer of the decree for the Eretrian oaths and that the wording has simply been adjusted to fit Chalkis.

In the modern world international agreements are signed by ambassadors or other representatives, and this is usually followed by ratification of the agreement by the sovereign bodies of the relevant state. Adherence to the agreement is, or may be, backed up by the apparatus of international law, including in some cases international courts and tribunals. Oaths do not usually come into it. In the ancient Greek world, there was a similar distinction between initial agreement by envoys and subsequent ratification, but there was no idea of "signing", and a less developed international legal infrastructure. Instead it was common practice for representatives of each city to bind the city to adhere to the agreement by a solemn oath. The terms of the oaths varied from case to case, according to the circumstances. Here they reflect the fact that Chalkis was a subordinate member of Athens' Delian League, that it had just revolted, but also that, as Thucydides states, the revolt had been settled by agreement rather than by military force.

²⁹ Discussed further below on the date of the inscription.

Thus on the one hand formally Athens unilaterally imposes the terms of the oath on Chalkis (l. 21; we do not know, however, what discussions may have taken place in advance behind the scenes); not surprisingly, the oath begins with an undertaking not to revolt in future (22-25); and the Chalkidians go on to agree to pay tribute at the level that Chalkis “persuades the Athenians to agree” (26-27). The payment of tribute was a major cause of tension between Athens and her allies (Thuc. 1.99, see above, [Preface](#)), and may have been a factor in the background to the revolt. There follow undertakings relating to a “defensive” alliance: Chalkis will defend Athens, if the latter is attacked (27-31; as we have seen, the actual text of the alliance may have been inscribed on another stele). The oath finishes, however, with a strong acknowledgement of who is in control, with the Chalkidians being required to swear to “obey the Athenian People”. This is one of the more “imperialistic” clauses of the inscription: unlike the Athenian decree imposing a settlement on [Erythrai](#), dating a few years earlier before the peace with Persia ([IG I³ 14](#), 21-29), Chalkis is to swear loyalty to Athens alone, not to Athens and the allies.

On the other hand, unlike in the case of Erythrai, Athens does not interfere with Chalkis’ internal affairs (we shall come back later to why that may have been); and the undertaking to “obey Athens” is counterbalanced by a number of significant undertakings the Athenians make in their oath, beginning with not expelling the Chalkidians from Chalkis (4-5). This marks out Chalkis (and Eretria, for whom the same oath was sworn) as different from Hestiaia, who did suffer expulsions in 446; and will have resonated at Chalkis with memories of the expulsion of the *hippobotai*. The Athenians go on to undertake not to lay waste the city, nor to inflict arbitrary punishments on Chalkidians without the authority of the courts: removal of citizen rights (*atimia*, literally “dishonour”), exile, imprisonment, execution or confiscation, though there is a sting in the tail: “without the authority of the Athenian People” (6-10). In other words, if the Athenian Assembly so decides, such extra-judicial punishments may indeed, it seems, be inflicted. The next two provisions are also somewhat blunted by qualifications: the Athenians, when serving as prytany members, undertake not to put anything prejudicial to Chalkidian interests to the vote (i.e. in the Council or Assembly), but this is not an absolute commitment, merely “without due notice”, though it is not specified what “due notice” might be (10-12); and they also undertake to give any embassy from Chalkis a hearing “within 10 days” (that probably reflects that Assemblies were held at intervals of no more than 10 days, four in a prytany). This is a not insignificant undertaking, given the press of Assembly business, but again there is a let-out clause, “as far as is possible”. Finally the whole raft of Athenian undertakings will only be maintained, “while the Chalkidians obey the Athenian People”.

On the Athenian side the oath is to be sworn by the Council of 500 and the jurors. There is no fixed pattern in international agreements for who swears oaths on behalf of Athens. The Council, the archons and the generals all might feature. Here the two groups reflect the emphasis in the oath on decisions in the Athenian courts and on actions of the

Council prytanies. The analysis of the Athenian constitution written in the School of Aristotle in the fourth century BC records that the whole body of jurors numbered 6,000 (*Constitution of the Athenians*, 24.3). The size of the two groups of oath-takers emphasises the importance attached to the agreement. In Chalkis the oath is to be sworn by all adult males, again a large body (perhaps ca. 6,500). The provisions for sanctions against recusants are fierce (deprivation of citizen rights and confiscation of property), though falling short of the death penalty; and in a provision worthy of an Orwellian Big Brother, the name of every citizen of Chalkis who swears the oath is to be listed (though a superficial appearance of even-handedness is created by applying the same to the Athenians, ll. 17-18).

Decree 2 ([ll. 40-69](#))

Decree 2 specifies several measures in relation to Chalkis. The oath comes first, and is to be the same as that sworn in relation to Eretria (40-46). Next comes a provision from which it is apparent that the Athenians have taken hostages as a guarantee of Chalkis' good behaviour and that Chalkis has made representations for their return. A previous decree on the subject is referred to (49). The Athenians decide to keep the hostages for the time being, but hold out the promise of settling the issue on mutually agreeable terms at some point in the future. Clearly the Athenians feel that the loyalty of Chalkis cannot be relied on without them.

There follows an obscurely worded, but rather important, clause about taxation arrangements (52-57). There was no income tax in the ancient Greek world, but taxes might be levied on other things, including property and international trade. This provision seems to guarantee Chalkis the right to tax foreigners. It goes on to specify, however, that exceptions are to be made for foreigners who are residents of Chalkis and as such exempt from Athenian taxation (if property taxation is at issue here, the assumption seems to be that, rather as in the modern world, you are taxed only once and where you pay tax depends on your place of residence), and for those who enjoy special privileges of tax exemption at Athens. Neither of these groups is to be liable to Chalkidian taxes. One of the problems is that it is not clear what types of taxes are at issue here. Another is whether the exception for "foreigners resident in Chalkis" is meant to include Athenians. If so, this would seem to amount to a major tax privilege at Chalkis for Athenians resident there — they would appear to be exempt from tax both at Athens and at Chalkis — and those specially favoured by Athens. It may, however, be that taxes on trade are partly or mainly at issue, in which case there would still be some advantage to Chalkis: Athenian citizen or metic traders with Chalkis who were not actually resident in Chalkis would still be obliged to pay taxes to Chalkis on goods traded. Understanding the situation is further complicated by our ignorance of whether there were still

Athenian cleruchs in Chalkis. If there were, they may have been covered by one or other of these exemptions. As we have seen, the terms of the oath may hint that the level of tribute imposed by Athens was a cause of the Euboean revolt. It seems quite possible that Chalkis (and the other Euboean cities) had argued that their “tax base” was insufficient to fund tribute at the level required by Athens, not least because they could not exact taxes from Athenian residents (and other foreigners?). In that case this provision will represent Athens’ response to these complaints. It is a pity that we simply do not have enough background information to understand it fully.

Next comes the provision for having the decree inscribed. Both the decree and the oath (decree 1) are to be inscribed on the Athenian acropolis at the expense of the Chalkidians. It was not unusual in the fifth century for Athens to require decrees relating to foreigners, including honorific decrees, to be inscribed at the expense of the “beneficiaries”;³⁰ but Athens’ predominance over Chalkis is emphasised in this case by directly ordering the Council at Chalkis to erect a copy in their own major sanctuary, that of Zeus Olympios (previously mentioned as recipient of a tithe of the property to be confiscated from anyone in Chalkis who does not swear the oath, l. 35). This is not merely a bureaucratic matter; inscribing a decree of this kind before the gods in a public, religiously charged place, gave it a solemn and enduring significance, and acted as an important guarantee that its provisions would be adhered to.

The inscribing provision was usually the final provision of a decree, and this was most likely the original intention in this case; but a further provision relating to sacrifices follows it, after a gap in the text on the stone (64-69). We cannot match up with certainty the inscribed words of decrees with a precise sequence of events in the Council and Assembly (for one thing, the inscription does not tell us about proposals that were not agreed by the majority), but here one can perhaps imagine that Antikles first presented to the Assembly a draft decree that went as far as the inscribing provision, in the discussion one or more of his fellow citizens raised the topic of the “sacrifices for Euboea” to general approval, and either Antikles himself, or the secretary of the Council, who was responsible for writing up the Assembly’s decision (57-58), added the provision on sacrifices onto the end of the original draft decree. Three men appointed from the Council are to carry out the sacrifices together with Hierokles. We know from satirical references to him by the comic poets, Aristophanes (*Peace*, 1047) and Eupolis (*Cities*, F231), that Hierokles was an influential oracle-monger from Hestiaia, the city from which, in 446, Athens expelled the inhabitants and replaced it with a cleruchy. Hierokles might have been a “native” Hestiaian, but is more likely to have been one of the Athenian cleruchs. Most likely the “oracle” in l. 65 was not one that Athens had officially sought on this occasion (as is usually the case with oracles referred to in decrees), but an existing one that Hierokles persuaded the Athenians they needed to act on by making sacrifices

³⁰ Another example is [IG I³ 101](#) = OR 187, for the Thracian Neapolitans.

to ensure their actions in Euboea received divine sanction. [Delphi](#) was the usual source of oracular pronouncements, but not the invariable one (the ancient oracle of Zeus at [Dodona](#) in north-west Greece, for example, is sometimes consulted), and we cannot be certain about the origin of the oracle in this case. In any case the provision emphasises the priority given by the Athenians to keeping on the right side of the gods, even when the authority of those expounding what the gods required might in other contexts be made fun of.

Decree 3 ([Il. 70-80](#))

Decree 3 is like the foregoing provision about the sacrifices in that it represents an addition to Antikles' proposal moved successfully in the Assembly, but this time the proposal is attributed to a specific named citizen, Archestratos. The first provision relates to the process of accounting by officials for their conduct in office (*euthynai*).³¹ The thrust of the provision is to guarantee the independence of the Chalkidians' own system, except that in the case of the toughest penalties (death, exile or loss of citizen rights), the case is to be referred to the Athenian courts, "in accordance with the decree of the People". This last provision suggests that this principle had already been established by decree, though the precise terms and scope of that decree (what cities were covered, and what legal processes) are unclear. Again it would be interesting to know more about the context and background here. Had there been cases where the jurisdiction of the Chalkidian courts had been challenged, and had these been a contributory cause for revolt? We do not know.

There follows (76-79) the one explicitly military provision of the decree, relating to the "guarding" of Euboea, i.e. the military forces or garrisons that might be needed to protect the country "in the best interests of the Athenians". If specific proposals on this subject had been brought before the Athenian Assembly, none of them was agreed, and the matter is delegated to the generals to take care of "as best they can".

³¹ In literary sources the term *euthynai* can mean legal penalties more broadly than in relation to accounting procedures for officials, and some scholars have thought it carries that meaning here (see [Brock 2009](#), 154); but in inscriptions *euthynai* invariably signifies accounting procedures, and that is also more consistent with the specification that the Chalkidians are to be responsible for the *euthynai* in relation to Chalkidians as responsibility lies with Athens in respect of Athenians. Only Athenians held office at Athens, whereas the Athenian courts could inflict penalties more generally on both Athenians and non-Athenians.

The political complexion of Chalkis

It was a well-known feature of the Athenian Empire that, other things being equal, there was a natural tendency for Athens to support democratic constitutions in Greek cities and for oligarchic factions in those cities to gravitate towards Sparta (see for example, on the general pattern, Thuc. 3.82.1). In the epigraphic record this is demonstrated most clearly by the settlement of Erythrai, probably dating to the late 450s ([IG³ 14](#)), where Athens specifically provides for a democratic constitution. It seems fairly clear from our inscription that the constitution of Chalkis was democratic both before and after the settlement. The reference to the Chalkidian Council (61) is not very indicative. Councils were common features of Greek cities of whatever constitutional complexion, and we are not given enough information about the one in Chalkis to see whether or not it was democratically constituted (e.g. in its size and mode of appointment); but the fact that every Chalkidian of military age (32-35) is required to swear the oath is suggestive that the Chalkidian People wielded significant power; and the reference to *euthynai* being applied to officials at Chalkis, “just as the Athenians do” is also strongly suggestive. At around this very time Herodotos was penning the earliest explicit debate about the merits of different constitutions in Western literature, a dramatised account set in Persia in 522 of a debate between leading Persians as to the relative merits of monarchy, oligarchy and “rule of the mass” (Hdt. 3.80). One of the key features of “rule of the mass” highlighted by its defender, Otanes, is precisely that in this system officials are accountable.³² If Chalkis was already democratic, it would also help explain why, despite its revolt, it was able to reach an agreement with the Athenians which left it relatively unscathed and why Athens did not feel any need to impose a democratic constitution, as it had done in the case of Erythrai. Most likely the expulsion of the *hippobotai* from Chalkis in 506 had entailed a shift to a more democratic constitution, and that was still in place in 446.

As we have seen, Chalkis initially remained loyal to Athens in 411 (when Athens was briefly controlled by an oligarchy of 400), providing a safe haven for Athenian ships escaping from the defeat inflicted on them by the Peloponnesians at the battle of Eretria (Thuc. 8.95.6), though Thucydides implies that Chalkis joined in the general revolt of the island (except Hestiaia) instigated by the Peloponnesians in the aftermath of their victory (Thuc. 8.95.7). This would seem consistent with maintenance of a democracy through this period, and a stray reference in another speech of Lysias (24 *For the Disabled Man*, 25) suggests that Chalkis may have been a popular place of refuge for democrats during the oppressive regime of the Thirty which briefly held power in Athens in the aftermath of the eventual Spartan victory in 404. It makes a lot of sense that Athens would wish to

³² The nature of the body to whom officials were accountable was also relevant to the extent to which a system was democratic. Like Athens, we may assume that the accounting processes at Chalkis were democratically constituted.

ensure continued democratic government in a city so close to home and so strategically important.

The date of the inscription

As we saw in section 1, most decree inscriptions from the generation ca. 450-420 are difficult to date precisely, or with certainty, and this one is no exception. Most scholars have dated it to Pericles' settlement of the revolt of Euboea in 446, but one, Harold Mattingly, has consistently argued for the context of the thinly attested campaign against Euboea of 424/3.³³ That would shift the context from the tail end of the so-called "First Peloponnesian War" to the middle of the Archidamian War, the first phase of the Peloponnesian War proper, which imposed major strains on the financing of the Athenian Empire and on Athens' relations with her allies. In such a context, argues Mattingly, the imperialistic tone of these decrees is more easily understandable. Most experts have remained unconvinced,³⁴ but a few have been swayed, at least into agnosticism.³⁵ Mattingly deploys three significant arguments or sets of arguments:

(a) He argues that there are better parallels for the phraseology of the decrees in the 420s than the 440s. These parallels are not very persuasive. To give one example, Antikles begins decree 2 with the phrase, "for the good fortune of the Athenians". Expressions of this kind are not common in fifth-century inscriptions. Mattingly notes that "for good fortune" occurs in the heading of an inventory in 426/5 (*IG I³ 300*, l. 1) in the decrees of 415 relating to the Sicilian expedition (*IG I³ 93*, l. 3) and in a very fragmentary inscription of 410-404 (*SEG 39.18*, ll. 6-7); and in literary sources, including in several places in Aristophanes and in the opening of Thucydides' text of the one-year's truce agreed between Athens and Sparta in 424/3, which also begins "for the good fortune of the Athenians" (Thuc. 4.118.11). He concludes (2002, 379): "the only two fifth-century texts with the full formula [i.e. including "of the Athenians"] ought to belong in 424/3". One problem with this is that the third of the inscriptions cited, *SEG 39.18*, is from the re-inscription of Athenian law that took place at the end of the fifth century, and the phrase may have been included in the (undatable, but quite possibly substantially earlier) original. Also, use of an expression of this kind is not very plausibly seen as some kind of fixed official formula, but as a phrase that could be included or omitted depending on the style choice of the drafter. The majority of our relevant epigraphical and literary evidence belongs in the 420s or later in any case (the earliest extant plays of Aristophanes date to the 420s). A pattern of occurrence of this formula in

³³ [Mattingly 1961](#), [Mattingly 2002](#), [Mattingly 2014](#).

³⁴ E.g. [Rhodes 2008](#), 504-505; cf. [Rhodes 2014](#).

³⁵ E.g. [Papazarkadas 2009](#), 73-74.

inscriptions in 446/5, 426/5, 415, earlier than 410-404, is really no less likely than 426/5, 424/3, 415, earlier than 410-404; and the only two occurrences of the full expression (including “of the Athenians”) might as easily date to 446/5 and 424/3 as both to 424/3.

In his last published discussion of this decree (2014), Mattingly emphasised one argument of this kind which deserves closer attention. In the decree relating to Erythrai of the late 450s, [IG I³ 14](#), ll. 23-25, the members of the newly instituted democratic Council there are required to swear loyalty to “the mass [i.e. the People] of the Athenians and the allies”, whereas in our decree (l. 22), the loyalty sworn by the Chalkidians is to the Athenians alone. This may be partly down to a difference in choice of wording between the different drafters of these decrees, or a difference in emphasis to suit the different circumstances of distant Erythrai, which had not certainly revolted, and whose newly installed democracy Athens might plausibly have wanted to conciliate, and Chalkis, which had definitely revolted and was much closer to home and more essential from a security and economic perspective to bind closely to Athens; but the change in emphasis does also seem consistent with the shift from “Delian League” to “Athenian Empire” that was represented by the move of the League treasury from Delos to Athens in 454 and peace with Persia ca. 450. Mattingly deploys two further parallels to argue that this shift to loyalty to Athens alone is more likely to have taken place in the 420s. The decree relating to [Kolophon](#) (further south from Erythrai along the coast of Asia Minor), [IG I³ 37](#), ll. 43-47, dated by Mattingly to 428/7, has plausibly been restored to yield a loyalty oath to Athens alone. On the other hand, the very fragmentary decree of 439 relating to the settlement of Samos following its revolt, [IG I³ 48](#), fr. cda ll. 3-5, includes an oath of loyalty to Athens, followed by a reference to the allies, perhaps an extension of the oath to them. On Mattingly’s datings, we therefore get a nice linear progression: late 450s and 439, loyalty sworn to allies; 428/7 and 424/3 loyalty sworn to Athens alone. Aside from technical uncertainties,³⁶ however, the different wordings might be due to other factors than a linear increase in imperial “harshness”: as with Erythrai, Samos was across the other side of the Aegean and Athens had just installed a democratic regime that she might plausibly have wished to conciliate. The decree for Kolophon, on the other hand, entails an Athenian settlement there (cf. Thuc. 3.34), and Athens may have felt that absolute loyalty to Athens was needed to ensure the security of its settlers.

(b) Also unpersuasive are most of Mattingly’s attempts to identify men named in our decrees with men attested in the 420s. There were many Athenians named Drakontides or Antikles (for example) and without their patronymics and demotics the proposers and

³⁶ [Rhodes 2008](#) preferred ca. 447 for the Kolophon inscription, though at 2014, 45 he is swayed by [Matthaïou 2009](#) towards 428/7 (cf. [Matthaïou 2010](#), 21-24). The reconstruction of the text of the Samos inscription to yield an oath of loyalty to the allies is not wholly certain.

officials named in the inscription can not be identified.³⁷ There is, however, one exception. As we have seen, Hierokles, who is named in l. 67 in connection with the sacrifices required by the oracle, is plausibly the same Hierokles who was a character in Aristophanes' *Peace* and is referred to in Eupolis' *Cities*. The *Peace* was produced in 421, and Eupolis' play at about the same time, perhaps the previous year. It is quite a seductive argument that these two comic references show that Hierokles was at the height of his fame and influence in the late 420s. Again, however, we must bear in mind the spotty nature of our evidence. Was Hierokles active and influential for three or four years or for twenty-five years? In truth, either is possible.

(c) Finally, another passage of Aristophanes, this time from the *Knights*, produced in early 424, where at ll. 235-38, the character Paphlagon addresses two slaves:

"By the twelve gods, you two won't get away with your unending plots against the People! What's that Chalkidian cup [a type of drinking cup] doing here? It can only mean you're inciting the Chalkidians to revolt!" (transl. J. Henderson, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard UP, 1998).

This passage might suggest that a revolt by Chalkis was on the cards in early 424 and that Athens' intervention in Euboea later in 424/3 as attested by Philochoros was directed against unrest in Chalkis which might, in turn, have resulted in our decrees. It must be said, however, that this and the very wide-ranging measures implied by our decrees are an awfully big superstructure to build on a brief reference in Philochoros to an event not even mentioned by Thucydides. Moreover, while we know nothing for certain about the relative roles of the different Euboean cities in any action that may have taken place in 424/3 (the campaign was not even necessarily in response to a revolt³⁸), it is arguable that the situation implicit in our decrees fits too precisely that recorded by Thucydides in 446 for that to be plausibly attributed to coincidence. In particular, Thucydides' separation of the Euboean cities with which Pericles reached peaceful agreement from Hestiaia as the city that was treated more harshly, is mirrored in our decree in the applicability of the same oath to Chalkis as was applied to Eretria, and the absence of any mention of Hestiaia. As we have seen it is also attractive to understand the very first undertaking Athens makes in her oath, not to expel the Chalkidians from Chalkis (l. 4), as an oblique reference to the fate of the Hestiaians on this occasion. In contrast, there is

³⁷ E.g. Mattingly (most recently [2014](#), 12) suggests Drakontides, the prytany chairman from Antiochis in our decree, was Drakontides of Thorai, general in 433/2 (Thuc. 1.45.2, [IG I³ 364](#), 20-21), but Drakontides was not a particularly rare name and the prytany chairman, essentially a random councillor, was not usually a prominent individual.

³⁸ As [Sommerstein 1981](#), 155, points out, the Spartan colony of [Herakleia in Trachis](#), founded in 426 and providing a convenient base from which to threaten Euboea, understandably generated Athenian anxiety (Thuc. 3.92-93). See also [Moreno 2007](#), 135-36.

nothing in our decrees to suggest that they were passed in the context of the latter stages of the Archidamian War — no references to other forces in the field or to enemy threats and none of the breathless sense of wartime pressure and pace which, as we shall see, characterises the reassessment decree of 425/4.

Mattingly's concern to defend Athens from charges of "harsh imperialism" before it was driven to it by the pressures of the Peloponnesian War, implicit in the title of his collected papers, *The Athenian Empire Restored*, and to construct the history of the Empire in terms of a linear development of "harshness" as time progressed, is perhaps a little simplistic. As we have seen, Thucydides implies that Athens was apt to take a hard line with its allies more or less from the start; and there were many other factors that might induce a more or less "harsh" approach to a particular ally in one or other respect in a particular set of circumstances, including strategic importance and closeness to home, political circumstances in the ally in question, the dynamic of relationships between pro- and anti-Athenian factions, interests of Athenian citizens in the area, potential threats from external hostile powers, and so on. We rarely if ever have full knowledge of the circumstances of Athenian interventions, and we should beware of the temptation to jump to conclusions on the basis of inadequate evidence. As we have seen, whether one sees a particular measure or set of measures recorded in an inscription as "harsh" or not, is often open to debate, and the provisions of our inscription can be taken both ways: "harsh" in some respects (e.g. loyalty sworn to Athens alone, and the listing of every Chalkidian who took the oath), conciliatory in others (no expulsions, guarantees offered Chalkis in respect of treatment of her interests by Athens and independence of her accountability procedures) and opaque in others (taxation provisions). As for the date of our inscription, we should acknowledge that the case for neither date is decisive, and keep an open mind, but in the present state of evidence and debate, 446 looks more likely.

SECTION 3 THE TRIBUTE REASSESSMENT DECREE³⁹

Background

Success in war is mostly achieved by sound policies and superior financial resources. This, as reported by Thucydides (2.13.2), was Pericles' stated view in 431 at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War. One of Athens' major strengths, Pericles emphasised, lay in her revenue from the allies, usually around 600 talents a year in tribute, and for this reason, if for no other, it was going to be necessary to keep the allies "in hand". According to Thucydides (1.96.2), the first tribute assessment in 478/7 had amounted to 460 talents. With the accession of new members and the steady increase in the number of allies who paid tribute rather than contributing ships (by the beginning of the war only [Chios](#) and [Lesbos](#) were in the latter category), this suggests that, broadly speaking, the average level of tribute imposed on the allies was not substantially higher in 431 than it had been in 478. For the early years we have little or no information about tribute levels, but in 454/3 the treasury of the Delian League was transferred from Delos to Athens, and from then on lists of the sixtieth portion of the tribute set aside for the goddess Athena were inscribed on the acropolis. Substantial fragments of two massive monuments survive, the so-called "Tribute Lists", the first covering the years 454/3-440/39 (with a mysterious one year's gap, perhaps 449/8⁴⁰), the second the years 439/8-432/1. Three extracts from these lists are translated on A/O: List 1, 454/3, [IG I³ 259](#); List 13, 442/1, [IG I³ 270](#); List 21, 434/3, [IG I³ 278](#). The total annual tribute implied by the first and second monuments is ca. 350-400 talents, somewhat lower than Thucydides' figures, but not of a different order of magnitude. The shortfall is perhaps to be accounted for by differences between assessment levels (Thucydides) and tribute actually collected (the inscriptions). While there are fluctuations in the level of tribute paid by individual cities, and there were systematic reassessments every four years (coinciding with the Great Panathenaia), the lists also confirm that the overall level of tribute collected remained fairly steady across the period they cover.

Thucydides continues to allude to financial issues and matters relating to the tribute in his narrative of the first ten-year phase of the Peloponnesian War, the Archidamian War (431-421). He notes that the Athenians became anxious about their finances in the winter of 428/7 (3.19), and thereafter sought to raise more money from

³⁹ [IG I³ 71](#), [OR](#) 153, [ML](#) 69, [Fornara](#) 136, [LACTOR](#)⁴ 1.138. Our translation of the body of the decree (ll. 1-60) is based on the Greek text established by [Matthaiou 2009](#), 18-68.

⁴⁰ The most recent suggestion is that this gap may be connected with a scandal involving the controversial disappearance of some money and the execution of the Athenian officials who were responsible for the tribute, the *Hellenotamiai*, Antiphon 5.69-71 ([Tracy 2014b](#)).

property taxes on Athenian residents (*eisphorai*) and by exacting more money from the allies. He records ships being sent to collect money from the allies in the winters of 430/29, 428/7 and 425/4 (2.69, 3.19, 4.50, discussed further below), but he does not give us very specific or systematic information about the development of Athens' policy in relation to the tribute. Again we must turn to inscriptions to fill out the picture. Tribute lists continued to be inscribed during the war years; from 431/0 onwards a separate stele was used for each year, but very few fragments of these lists survive, and they are not securely datable until the list for 421/0 (*IG I³ 285*). What we do have, however, are three inscriptions dating to the mid-420s which document Athens seeking both to tighten the administrative arrangements for tribute collection and to increase the levels of tribute significantly.

What is probably the earliest of the three is known as "Kleonymos' decree", though in fact the inscription contains two decrees, only the first of which was certainly proposed by Kleonymos (*IG I³ 68*). The main thrust of the measure is to oblige each allied city to appoint its own "tribute-collectors" and it sets in place new systems for pursuing non-payers. The date cannot be pinned down precisely. There are inconclusive indications that Kleonymos may have proposed our decree and two others (*IG I³ 61*, decree 2 and *IG I³ 69*) as councillor in 426/5. In any case the decree is likely to have been passed ca. 428-425. This inscription is also notable for being headed by a sculpted relief, a fragment of which survives (*Lawton 1995*, no. 1). Such reliefs were a feature of some inscriptions from the 420s through to around the end of the fourth century, and expressed or illustrated the subject matter of the text, or aspects of it. This, one of the earliest, depicts the jars and sacks in which the tribute was carried.

What seems to be the latest of the three (because it presupposes the arrangements made in the other two) is "Kleinias' decree", in this case most likely a single decree proposed by Kleinias (*IG I³ 34*). It starts with administrative provisions which seem designed to prevent discrepancies, caused by sharp practices in transit, between the amount of tribute alleged by a city to have been sent to Athens, and the amount actually received. A written record (perhaps on leather, perhaps on folding wooden tablets coated on the inside with wax, scratched with the message) authenticated with special seals are henceforth to accompany the tribute to Athens, to be opened on delivery and compared with the tribute received. The "Greek treasurers" (*Hellenotamiai*), the Athenian officials responsible for tribute collection, are to report to a special Assembly to be held in the spring after the City Dionysia (at which the year's tribute was displayed) on which cities have paid, and which have not. Four commissioners are then to be appointed to go to the different regions of the Empire to deliver tribute receipts to the cities and to pursue non-payers. A legal process is provided for anyone who is suspected of abusing this new system. The same process is to apply to the cow and suit of armour (*panoply*) which each city was obliged to send to Athens together with the tribute. (As we shall see, this obligation had been recently imposed on

all the allies by the reassessment decree). The rest of the text is not well preserved, but it is clear enough that it included arrangements for cases in which allies disputed allegations of non-payment.

Between Kleonymos' and Kleinias' decrees the Athenians passed "Thoudippos' decree", [IG I³ 71](#). It introduces a reassessment of tribute which is explicitly dated to the archonship of Stratokles (425/4, ll. 57 and 59).

The Inscription

DECREES ABOUT REASSESSMENT OF TRIBUTE OF THE DELIAN LEAGUE, 425/4 BC ("THOUDIPPOS' DECREES") [IG I³ 71](#), revised and new fragment added by [Matthaïou 2009](#), 18-68 (text translated).⁴¹ Restored text is approximately indicated by [].

Other reference numbers: [OR](#) 153, [ML](#) 69, [Fornara](#) 136, [LACTOR](#)⁴ 1.138.

Date: 425/4 BC

Original location: [Acropolis]

Findspots: Numerous fragments found on Acropolis and nearby (Epigraphical Museum 6728, EM 6858 + 6860 + 6861 + 6862 + 6867 + 6728 + 5399 + 13520, Metropolitan Museum, New York 26.60.5)

Translation by: P. J. Rhodes and Stephen Lambert

Gods.

Assessment of tribute.

Decree 1A (Council and People)

The Council and the People decided. - was the prytany; -on was secretary; - was chairman.

Thoudippos proposed: to send heralds whom the Council shall elect from [those present?] to the (5) cities, two [to [Ionia](#) and [Karia](#)], two [to the [Thraceward](#) region, two] to the Islands, [two to] the [Hellespont](#); and these shall - to the common body of each city that envoys are to be present in the month of

Maimakterion . . . introducers . . . these shall also choose (?) a secretary and

a co[-secretary?] . . . ; and the Council shall . . . ten men; and these

shall make the assessments for the cities within ten days from when they are appointed (?), or each

(10) of them shall be penalised [a hundred drachmas?] for each day; and the oath-administrators shall

administer an oath to the [assessors] . . . happen . . . the

same penalty . . . the introducers [shall take care of the assessments when the

People shall vote?] . . . [the -] and the polemarch shall . . . the court, the jurors

⁴¹ For a general discussion of the text of this and other fifth-century Athenian inscriptions see [Matthaïou 2010](#).

3. The Tribute Reassessment Decree

voting on them by tribes; . . .

(15) for the cities in accordance with . . . shall be penalised ten thousand drachmas . . .

of them. The court presidents (*thesmothetai*) (?) shall establish a new [court of a thousand] . . . ;

[since the tribute] has become too

little, they shall together with the Council make the assessments [greater than those of the last] period of office . . . [dealing with the matter] . . . of the month Posideon . . .

from the first day of the month in the same way, so that the tribute shall be assessed in the month Posideon; [and the Council] . . .

(20) shall deal with the business and . . . so that the assessments shall be made if . . . ; and there shall not be a

[lesser] tribute for any [of the cities] than the [amount which they were] paying [previously], unless for [any one there is a problem] that the land [is unproductive so that] it is impossible [to pay more?]; and

the secretary of the Council shall write up [the assessments] which are made [and the total] tribute as it is

assessed [and this decree] on two stone stelai, and shall place one in the Council chamber and

(25) the other [on the acropolis]; and the official sellers shall make the contract, and the payment officers shall give them the money; [and for the future, send] to the cities about the [tribute before?]

the Great [Panathenaia] . . . the prytany which is in office . . . Panathenaia;

[and if the prytany members do not] . . . to the People and [do not enter the Council chamber?]

concerning the [tribute and the Council does not deal with the business?] in their own term of office, each of the

(30) prytany members shall owe a hundred drachmas sacred to Athena and a hundred to the state treasury,

and each of the prytany members shall be [liable at their accounting] to a fine of a thousand drachmas (?); and if any one else in any way [prevents] . . .

the assessments at the time of the Great Panathenaia in the prytany which holds office first, he shall be deprived of his rights and his property shall be confiscated with a tithe for the goddess; and

the prytany of - shall be obliged to bring these matters before the People, when the force . . . , on the

(35) third day, first after the sacred business; and if the business is not completed on that day, they shall deal with

this business first on the next day, and continuously until it is completed in the - prytany; and if they do not

bring it before the People or do not complete it in their own term of office, each of the prytany members shall be

liable at his accounting to a penalty of ten thousand drachmas for preventing the provision of funds (?) for the forces; and the

men summoned . . . by the public summoners shall be present (?) . . . so that the Council may punish them if they

(40) are judged not to . . . rightly; and the routes for the heralds . . . the

3. The Tribute Reassessment Decree

oath, the assessors, how far they shall travel, so that they shall not determine their own itinerary
(?) . . .

the assessments for the cities . . . be clear where it is decided . . . concerning
the assessments and [the decree for the cities] it is necessary for a proposal to be made [and
about this

also for the People] to make a decree, and if [there is anything else] . . . [need?]; [and how] the
cities

(45) are to bring [the tribute] . . . when [the Council makes?] the assessment of the tribute, so that
[the

People shall have money available for the] war; [and the generals] shall be obliged to make
[an analysis] about the tribute each year . . . whether there is need for contributions towards
actions on

land or at sea or for any other good purpose which they may propose for the People at the first
session

of the Council (?); and concerning this [the court?] shall scrutinise continuously [with *or* without]
the other courts, unless

(50) it is decided that the Council should consider in advance how matters are to be arranged in
the most advantageous way for the People; and

(51) the payment officers shall make the payment for the heralds who are going.

Decree 1B (People)

(51) [S]okra[tides] proposed: in other respects in accordance with the Council,
but with regard to the assessments which have to be raised city by city the prytany members who
happen to be in office and the secretary of the Council shall [take care?], when there is a

(54) case about the assessments, that the court . . .

Decree 2 (Council and People)

(54) The Council and the People decided.

(55) Aigeis was the prytany; -ippos was secretary; -oros was chairman. Thoudippos proposed:
those

cities for which tribute was assessed under the Council for which Pleistias was first secretary, in
the

archonship of Stratokles (425/4), shall all bring a cow and panoply to the Great Panathenaia; and
they

(58) shall take part in the procession . . .

Tribute assessment

(58) The Council for which Pleistias [of -] was first secretary
assessed the tribute for the cities as follows (*or* in accordance with the foregoing), in the
archonship of Stratokles (425/4), under the

(60) introducers for whom Ka- [of -] was secretary.

A list follows of the new tribute levels to be paid by each member, arranged by region. See [AIO](#) for a translation of the first part of the list (Island region), showing in brackets on the right the rate at which each city paid tribute in the 430s. The overall total, given in col. 4, l. 181, was probably 1,460-1,499 talents.

Commentary

The state of preservation of this inscription is frustrating; in many places enough words or parts of words survive to be suggestive of a drift of sense, but not to enable the precise meaning to be pinned down. The main shape and thrust of the document, however, is clear enough. The decrees provide for a reassessment of the tribute across the Empire (ll. 1-60), and this is followed by a list setting out the new level of tribute to be paid by each city (ll. [61-181](#)). The general context and objective of the exercise is also made clear enough: the tribute had become too little to meet the purposes for which it was required (primarily military, l. 38) and needed therefore to be increased (ll. 16-17).

[ll. 1-26](#) set out the process of reassessment to be carried out in the current year (archonship of Stratokles, 425/4, ll. 57 and 59). Heralds are to go to each allied city, region by region,⁴² and summon envoys to Athens to discuss the tribute in Maimakterion (l. 7, the fifth month of the year, i.e. around the end of our year 425). From this it becomes clear that decree 1 was probably passed in the summer of 425, i.e. early in the year 425/4, though not in the first prytany, as Pleistias was secretary then (l. 56), whereas -on was secretary at the time decree 1 was passed (l. 3).

It will help illuminate the context to review the major events of the summer of 425 involving Athenian forces, as recorded by Thucydides at 4.1-49. At 49.2 the Athenians despatch a squadron of 40 ships to [Sicily](#), under the command of the generals, Sophokles and Eurymedon, with instructions to stop off at [Corcyra](#), another conflict point, en route. In the event a storm forces them to put in at [Pylos](#) on the south-western coast of [Lakonia](#) (actually in former [Messenian](#) territory, the inhabitants of which had long ago been reduced by the Spartans to a state of serfdom, the so-called “helots”) where they help the general Demosthenes to construct a fortification before moving on (3-5), only to return later when the Spartans set out to recover the fort (13). Meanwhile the Athenian general Simonides captures [Eion](#) in the Thraceward region, and loses it again, incurring heavy losses (7). The Athenian forces at Pylos succeed in cutting off a body of Spartan troops on the island of [Sphakteria](#) which lay across the bay of Pylos, and alarmed by this turn of events, conclude a truce with the Athenian generals at Pylos, with a view to sending envoys to Athens to see if a settlement of the war could be agreed (15). The peace terms they propose are turned down by the Athenians, influenced by

⁴² From 443/2 the collection of tribute was organised by region of the Empire (*IG* I³ 269), with the regions listed here first being used in 438/7 (*IG* I³ 274).

Kleon (16-22), and hostilities in Pylos are resumed (23). Meanwhile the relatively small Athenian naval force in Sicily is engaged in conflict there (24-25). The situation in Pylos reaching stalemate, Kleon offers to go to Pylos with minimal additional forces (mainly light armed troops and archers) — his concern with keeping the size of his force under control is perhaps an echo of the financial straits to which our decrees are a response — and either kill the Spartans on Sphakteria or bring them back alive within 20 days (26-28). Working with Demosthenes, the Athenians successfully attack the Spartans on Sphakteria, and Kleon succeeds in his stated objective of either killing them or, in the case of 92 Spartans, bringing them as captives to Athens within twenty days (29-40). The Athenians then establish a garrison at Pylos, manned by Messenians, who use Pylos as a base for raiding the Spartan homeland, Lakonia (41). Immediately after this Athens launches against [Corinth](#) a major force of 80 ships, hoplites, cavalry, and allied troops, under the command of Nikias and two other generals, engaging in hostilities there (42-45). The force destined for Corcyra at the beginning of the summer under Sophokles and Eurymedon now proceeds there from Pylos and assists in the brutal annihilation of the anti-democratic party there; they then proceed to their original primary destination, Sicily, and begin operations there (46-48). Finally, towards the end of the summer, the Athenians at [Naupaktos](#) campaign successfully with the [Akarnanians](#) against the Corinthian city of [Anaktorion](#) (49). This patently amounts overall to a hugely energetic, and costly, series of campaigns on several fronts, and helps us to understand the kind of financial pressures to which the reassessment decree is a response.

In a famous passage assessing the effects on Athens of Pericles' death from the plague two-and-a-half years into the war Thucydides criticises Pericles' successors for diverging from the essentially defensive strategy outlined by the great man at the start of the war: Athens should bide its time, look after its navy, and not seek to expand the Empire (2.65). The justice of Thucydides' assessment can be debated. Pericles' actual strategy at the beginning of the war may have been more pro-active than Thucydides' implies;⁴³ and after all Kleon's success at Pylos caused the Spartans to sue for peace; but Thucydides is certainly right to imply that Athens in 425 was pursuing anything but a cautious and defensive strategy. This vigorous and pro-active approach to the war, however, came at a financial cost to which our inscription is eloquent witness.

The very first event Thucydides records as taking place in the following winter (425/4) is the interception, at [Eion](#), by one of the generals commanding Athenian ships sent out to raise money, of Artaphernes, a Persian envoy to Sparta (4.50). It is not entirely clear how these ships relate to the measures provided for in the reassessment decree, but it is possible that they were carrying some of the heralds sent out to summon allied envoys to discuss the reassessment.

⁴³ On this see [Rhodes 2014](#), 49.

To return to the reassessment process provided for in the decree, ten assessors are to be appointed (perhaps by or from the Council) to fix the new level of tribute (8-9); the courts are also to have a role in the process, to ensure, presumably, that the allies' case is heard (the polemarch, mentioned in l. 13, was the archon who chaired the court dealing with matters involving foreign citizens);⁴⁴ they are to make their decision within 10 days, or face a fine (9-10); the whole business, overseen by the Council, is to be decided by the end of Posideon (the month following Maimakterion). No city is to pay less than previously, except, it seems, where it can make a case that its land is too unproductive to make higher payments feasible (l. 22). Fragments survive of two speeches written by the speechwriter Antiphon for allied cities pleading their case on tribute levels in the Athenian courts: one is for [Lindos](#) on Rhodes, the other for [Samothrace](#).⁴⁵ A surviving fragment of the latter supplies a good example of the sort of argumentation that might be expected:

“For the island which we occupy, as you can clearly see even from a distance, is high and rugged. Little of the land is useful and can be worked; most of it cannot be used, and it is a small island” (trans. Meiggs 1972, 241).

Perhaps the strongest impression conveyed by the tone of the main body of this decree is not so much its oppressive character in relation to the allies, but the pressure applied to Athenian officials, threatened with fines at every turn, and the speed with which the whole process is to be completed.

The decree, the new assessment and the total of the new tribute are to be inscribed in two copies, one on the acropolis, where it would have stood alongside the tribute lists, and one in the [Council chamber](#) (in the agora), where it would act as a reminder to the Council (22-26).

[ll. 26-33](#) then deal with the arrangements for future reassessments, to take place every four years at the Great Panathenaia (the next celebration of which would have been at the end of the first month of 422/1, Hekatombaion). Again the emphasis is on despatching the business swiftly and efficiently, with penalties imposed on the Council prytanies if they fail to ensure decisions are taken in a timely fashion.

At [ll. 33-38](#) we are back in the present. To understand these lines it is necessary to appreciate that this decree was “probouleumatic” (on the meaning of this, see above [section 1](#)). This is implied by the wording of the rider to this decree (decree 1B), which begins by expressing agreement with the Council’s proposal. The proposer of decree 1, Thoudippos, will accordingly have proposed the decree first in the Council, and then carried it through the Assembly. These lines put pressure on the relevant Council

⁴⁴ Some assessments in the Tribute Lists are specifically listed as having been made by the Council and 1500 jurors, *IG I³ 281* col. 2, ll. 60-65, *IG I³ 282* col. 1, ll. 43-49.

⁴⁵ Antiphon F 25-33 and 49-56 Thalheim.

prytanies to ensure this decree is itself despatched swiftly through the Council and the Assembly, and the relevant prytany members are to be liable to a swingeing fine of 10,000 drachmas if they don't deal with it, "for preventing the provision of funds for the forces". Since this proposal was itself formulated by the Council, this entails a considerable element of self-flagellation.

[Il. 38-51](#) contain a rather breathless list of further provisions, which cannot be fully reconstructed in detail, but the thrust of which is mostly clear; again a key theme is the pressurising of officials: the "public summoners" (in effect these appear to have been a kind of public prosecutor) are to bring miscreants before the Council for punishment (Il. 38-40); detailed travel itineraries are to be laid down for officials sent to the cities (Il. 40-41); provision is made for further proposals to be brought forward should these be needed (42-44), including on the mechanics of delivering the tribute (this was perhaps implemented in part by Kleinias' decree) (44-46); every year the generals are to plan out the military uses to which the tribute is to be put, and any other good purposes, and come forward with a suitable proposal for the Council at its first session of the year to forward to the Assembly (46-48); the courts are also to be involved (49-50); and payment is to be made (i.e. for travel expenses) to the heralds, i.e. those who are to set out shortly to the cities with the invitation to send envoys to Athens in Maimakterion (50-51).

As we have seen, the Assembly on this occasion largely ratified Thoudippos' proposal in the form that it came up from the Council, but at the Assembly's meeting a man named Sokratides succeeded in having a rider passed. It made some provision relating to the adjudication of disputed tribute assessments, but is unfortunately not well enough preserved for the thrust of it to be clear.

Thoudippos himself then returned to the charge at a Council meeting (and subsequent Assembly meeting) which clearly followed a short time after the passing of decree 1, though the prescript shows that it was not in the same prytany (different secretary). He proposes that those cities which have their tributes reassessed under the provisions of his first decree, should be required to bring a cow and a panoply to the Great Panathenaia (the next celebration of which would have been in 422/1) and take part in the procession. This represents the extension to all the cities of the Empire of an obligation of a kind already applied to some Athenian colonies;⁴⁶ and incidentally helps date this decree with respect to Kleinias', which refers back to this provision.⁴⁷

From the reassessment schedule we print on [AIO](#) the first part of the list only, the Island region, with, for comparison, the amount paid by the cities in the 430s shown in a separate column to the right. This was a very optimistic assessment. The whole list contained upwards of 400 tribute-payers, twice as many as are actually attested as paying in any year over the whole history of the Empire. For example, in l. 65 the Dorian

⁴⁶ E.g. Brea, [IG I³ 46](#), 15-16 (440-432 BC?). Erythrai was obliged to send grain to the Panathenaia, for distribution to those Erythraians who were present, [IG I³ 14](#), 3-4 (454-450 BC?).

⁴⁷ [IG I³ 34](#), 41-42.

island of [Melos](#) is assessed to pay 15 talents; but Melos was not a member of the Delian League at this point. The Athenians had pressurised it to join, most recently in 426, but Melos had resisted (Thuc. 3.91) and was to continue to resist until it was forced to capitulate in 416, incidentally producing the classic Thucydidean debate about the dynamics and morality of empire, the Melian dialogue (Thuc. 5.84-116). Some whole areas are assessed here for the first time, e.g. the [Black Sea](#) cities. The amount of assessed tribute also vastly exceeds the amounts paid before the war. The total Island region tribute, for example, was probably 163 talents. Before the war the region had paid ca. 90 talents, including 30 talents from [Aegina](#), which was taken over by Athens in 431 and does not appear in the reassessment list. Chalkis and Eretria are both recorded as paying 3 talents before the war. Chalkis is now asked to pay 10, Eretria 15 talents. The Hellespont and Thracian regions are assessed at upwards of three times their pre-war payment levels.

Although the reassessment is not registered by Thucydides (or Aristophanes), the Athenian orator and politician Andocides, speaking at Athens in favour of peace terms negotiated with Sparta in 391, remarks that after the Peace of Nikias (in 421) Athens had enjoyed tribute receipts of over 1,200 talents (3 *On the Peace*, 9; in 343 Aeschines 2.175 repeated Andocides' statement). This is broadly consistent with Plutarch, who, in one of his seemingly more historically accurate observations, remarks that Pericles' successors gradually increased the tribute from the 600 talents coming in at the start of the war (correctly citing Thucydides for this) to 1,300 talents.⁴⁸ The total of the reassessed tribute is unfortunately not fully preserved on the stone, and can be read as 1,460-1,499 talents or 960-999 talents. Considering that individual and regional tribute assessments, where preserved, are mostly upwards of three times pre-war payment levels, and that the total assessed tribute at the start of the war was 600 talents, the higher figure is much more likely. It is clear enough from the text of the decrees that this represented a significant ratcheting up of the tribute, though in the absence of clear evidence for the early years of the war it is very plausible that, as Plutarch implies, given wartime conditions it had already been increased before this to a level higher than at the beginning of the war.

A notable feature of this reassessment is that it took place outside the usual assessment cycle, linked to the Great Panathenaia. Some historians have not been slow to note that the decree was passed at around the same time as Kleon's (to Thucydides, unexpected) success against the Spartans at Pylos (Thuc. 4.26-41), that it was Kleon who argued for a hard line to be taken against Mytilene following its revolt in 427, including mass slaughter of the population (Thuc. 3.36-50), that Thoudippos might, at a stretch, be

⁴⁸ Plut. *Aristeides* 24.3. [Andocides] 4 *Against Alcibiades*, 11-12, asserts that Alcibiades was one of the assessors who doubled the tribute (while profiting from the process himself), but this is almost certainly inauthentic. The speech is probably a literary exercise written in much later times (see [MacDowell 1998](#), 160).

identified as Kleon's son-in-law,⁴⁹ and to draw an inference that this reassessment represents the adoption of a harshly imperialistic stance with respect to the allies, inspired by Kleon. Such a line of reasoning has superficial attractions, but it is arguably rather simplistic. Thucydides' remarks on the hard line taken by the Athenians in relation to its allies are made after his narrative of the very first revolt, that of Naxos in the 470s, and look forward across the whole span of the Delian League, not just the Peloponnesian War period (1.99). Since the financing of the war depended heavily on tribute, as Pericles remarks at the start of the war, it was going to be all the more imperative to keep firm control of the allies in wartime. The case for seeing Kleon's hand in the reassessment decree is not very strong, and no connection can be made between Kleon and the other two decrees of the 420s relating to the tightening of tribute collection procedures (Kleonymos' and Kleinias'). In substance the reassessment decree no doubt represented a significant increase in the financial burdens imposed on the allies, at least notionally (there doubtless continued in practice to be a gap between assessment levels and amounts actually collected), and we may wish to judge that as oppressive. On the other hand, the increase in tribute was arguably driven less by any specially extreme imperialistic ideology on the part of one or other politician than by the financial logic of a vigorous and pro-active war policy. Insofar as there is an aggressive tone in the decrees, it is, as we have seen, directed more against potentially miscreant Athenian officials than against the allies, for whom provision at least is made to be involved in negotiation of their tribute and for resort to the courts.⁵⁰

Arguably, the most remarkable feature of these decrees is the speed with which everything is required to be done: the assessors are to complete their work within ten days, and the process as a whole is to be carried through in just two months. This may put one in mind of Kleon in 425, but less perhaps his aggressive imperialism than his undertaking to bring back the Spartans at Pylos, cut off on Sphakteria island, within twenty days (Thuc. 4.28, cf. 39). War created an impetus to swift and energetic responses to military opportunities and challenges; but the city's capacity to seize the military initiative depended ultimately on her financial resources, and in the reassessment decree, as in the other two decrees of the 420s relating to tribute

⁴⁹ The speaker's opponent in an inheritance case for which Isaeus wrote the speech (9.17) was a wealthy man named Kleon son of Thoudippos of Araphen, and some scholars have speculated that he might be grandson of the famous Kleon (see [Davies 1971](#), pp. 228-30). The case for this, however, is inconclusive. Kleon was a common name, and the famous Kleon was from Kydathenaion, not Araphen, so a deme connection cannot be established. Thoudippos is a more unusual name, but it does occur outside Araphen, and, as we saw, with only the single name to go on, the proposers of decrees at this period can rarely be identified with confidence.

⁵⁰ The courts were of course Athenian courts and could be expected to favour the Athenian interest, a point overlooked in the Athenian defence of their application of the rule of law in the government of their Empire in the lead-up to the Peloponnesian War (Thuc. 1.77).

3. The Tribute Reassessment Decree

collection, we see the Athenians adopting a similarly swift and energetic response to problems they faced in that sphere of war management.